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The Mercury.

THE MERCURY PUBLISHING CO.

JOHN P. SANBORN, Editor.

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NEWPORT, R. I.

THE NEWPORT MERCURY was published in June, 1788, and is now in its one hundred and forty-second year. It is the oldest newspaper in the United States. It has been published in the English language. It is a large quarto weekly of forty-eight columns, filled with interesting reading material. It contains local and general news, well selected, interesting and valuable. It is published at the rate of \$2.00 a year in advance. Single copies are sold at the office of publication and at the various news rooms in the city. Specimen copies sent free, and special terms given advertisers by addressing the publisher.

Societies Occupying Mercury Hall.

MALHON LORGE No. 16, N. E. O. P. John Allen, Warden; James H. Goldford, Secretary; meets 1st and 3rd Wednesday evenings in each month.

THE NEWPORT HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY, James McElish, President; Alex. McClellan, Secretary; meets 2nd and 4th Wednesday evenings in each month.

REDAWOOD LODGE No. 11, K. of P., Albert C. Chisholme, Chamberlain; Commander Donald P. Bull, Keeper of Records and Seal; meet every Friday evening.

DAVIS DIVISION No. 5, U. R. K. of P., Mr. Knight Captain—Charles H. Ellis, Recorder; meets 1st Friday evening in each month.

Local Matters.

Only twenty-four working days remain in which to get the total registry vote for next year. All those who have lived in the State two years and in the city or town six months are entitled to register. This does not require a full two years' residence before registering, but those who will have been here two years next April or two years next November are entitled to register now so as to be able to vote at any election occurring after the two years' residence shall be completed. All those who will come of age next year in season to vote at any election must also register before the 31st of this month or they cannot vote. We have several times called attention to the importance of next year from the voter's standpoint, and all those entitled to register and don't will probably regret it when the voting time comes round. It costs nothing to register.

The Newport (R. I.) MERCURY persists in declaring itself the oldest newspaper in the United States. It was founded June 12, 1788, and it is claimed, has been published to the present time with only one interruption. The Mercury is probably the second oldest weekly paper in the country, but the first place held by the New Hampshire Gazette of Portsmouth, issued like the Mercury with a single week's interruption since 1788, always under the same name.—Exeter (N. H.) News-Letter.

When a man dies and is buried, that is the end of him as far as this world's existence is concerned. If some one else should marry the widow and move into the former husband's residence, he would still be considered by most people, including the widow, a very different person from husband No. 1. The same was with the New Hampshire Gazette that was started in 1788. It died a natural death many years since. The present paper of that name was started by different parties and with different material. The only thing old about it is the name.

Rapid progress is being made on the new city hall and it is now not a difficult matter to form an idea of how the building will appear when completed. The roof is rapidly approaching completion as far as the wood work is concerned and when the structure is roofed in it will be possible to continue the interior work regardless of the cold and storms of the winter season. The front tower over the Broadway entrance is being carried up and the unsightly gap in the middle of the building will soon be invisible. Much comment of a pleasing nature is heard on the appearance of the building.

Captain A. A. Barker, 20th U. S. Infantry, formerly colonel of the Newport Artillery, appears to be in line for promotion. Captain Barker is the senior captain of his regiment and as Colonel Rice, the commanding officer, has been recommended for promotion, it is probable that a step up will be taken all along the line. This will entitle Captain Barker to the position of Major, the same rank that he held in the First Rhode Island Volunteers during the war with Spain.

Dr. Robert N. Smith of Apponaug spent Thanksgiving with friends in this city.

Miss Susie Gardner of New London is visiting Mr. and Mrs. B. B. Sherman.

Newporters in Manila.

Abstract of an interesting letter from Captain A. A. Barker written upon the arrival of his Regiment at Manila.

The last letter from Captain A. A. Barker received by Mrs. Barker tells some interesting facts regarding the voyage of the 20th Infantry across the Pacific and its arrival at Manila, where, however, the regiment was not allowed to land, but was immediately transferred in the same transport to Iloilo in the Isle of Panay. The letter was written at various times during the last of October, and was received yesterday about six weeks after it was mailed.

In opening Captain Barker speaks of the large amount of work that has been placed upon him as he is on an examining board to examine men for promotion from the ranks, necessitating considerable work during the evening in examining papers submitted to the board. The examination includes reading, writing, spelling and arithmetic as well as proficiency in the military regulations. He has also been in command of the 3rd battalion of the regiment since the transport sailed from San Francisco, as Major Cook has been incapacitated by illness and, at the time the letter was sent, was under treatment at the hospital at Manila, suffering from malaria.

During the voyage across the Pacific, or at least the latter part of it, the weather was so warm that the officers could not sleep in their staterooms but took their mattresses out on deck and spent the nights there. The voyage across was uneventful, after leaving Honolulu, but the writer describes the splendor of the volcano on the Ladrone islands which they passed about two miles distant. He then describes the scene incident to the passage down along the coast to Manila, the vessel passing along within about two miles of the shore of Luzon, the natives being plainly visible along the shore or inland. Signal fires were plainly discernible, and the writer thought that they were conveying the news of the sighting of his transport to insurgents further inland.

The entrance to Manila Bay was finally reached, it being about as wide as Narragansett Bay between Newport and Jamestown, with an island about in the middle. The distance from the entrance to Manila is about thirty miles, and the transport anchored within two miles of the city alongside of other government transports. The vessel was boarded by the health officer and given a clean bill of health. Colonel Rice, Lieut. Col. Dickman, and the regimental adjutant went ashore to report to General Otis and preparations were made for disembarking the men, there being, all told, about 1800 persons aboard the vessel. Of these there were a few hundred "seasick" and men of the hospital department in addition to the 20th regiment.

Just as the men had congratulated themselves on spending some time on shore, away from the cramped quarters of the transport, orders were received for the regiment to remain on board in readiness to move to Iloilo. The hospital men and casualties were landed, and some of the officers, including Captain Barker, went ashore to see the city.

He contrasts the cities of Manila and Honolulu in a very vivid manner, the latter being but slightly different from the typical American city, while the former is plainly a city of a foreign land.

The writer gives a very interesting account of Manila and the customs of the natives, too long to publish. He describes the funeral of Major Howard, son of Gen. O. O. Howard, which took place while he was in the city. Major Howard was seated on a rug, reading, when two insurgent bullets pierced his body. Captain Barker was well acquainted with him, having met him while in camp with the First Rhode Island. He also tells of meeting Major Murray, who ministered in the First Rhode Island at Quonsett Point in this state.

The orders assigning the regiment to Iloilo for garrison duty were received with dissatisfaction as officers and men feared that they would see no service there. Subsequent events have, of course, proved this fear to be unfounded, and predictions to this effect were made to Captain Barker by brother officers at Manila, so that his disappointment was lessened somewhat.

The letter then goes on to describe the preparations made for taking the field, no luggage being allowed save what they could actually carry. The writer was engaged in sorting out what he would take and what he would leave, a task that entailed many difficulties and perplexities. A matter that appeared to be troubling Captain Barker somewhat was as to the appearance that he would create mounted upon one of the somewhat diminutive Philippine ponies.

Miss Bertha E. Vars is in New York visiting her sister, Mrs. William Rhiz, Jr. She will then go to Boston to visit her sister, Mrs. Harry J. M. Glencoe.

Park Commission.

The park commissioners met in regular session Tuesday afternoon, President Underwood presiding and Messrs. Honney, Weaver and Robinson being in attendance. For the committee on the old burial ground Mr. Weaver reported that the section had been graded, the stones and tombs attended to and two paths constructed so that public travel should not cross the graves.

The matter of a highway in the Rives land opposite Aunt Mary's pond was laid over to the next meeting by request of W. Watts Sherman, one of the petitioners. Mr. Sherman said that he could be present at the next meeting and go into the matter, and as he has given the matter much consideration it was postponed until then.

Mr. Weaver reported that Mr. Sherman had written him that he had secured concessions for the new boulevard over the Bates land and was making such fair progress on other lands that he hoped to be able to make a favorable report at the next meeting. The new burial park received its share of attention. At the last meeting of the commission, Messrs. Weaver and Robinson had been appointed a committee to report a plan for the preservation of the work already done and for the completion of the work. As the work had been done by the street department Mr. Weaver declined to interfere in the matter. The other members of the commission did not consider such a course offensive to the committee on streets and highways. Mr. Weaver resigned from the special committee and Mr. Honney was appointed in his stead. The chairman was authorized to prepare the annual report for the next regular meeting.

David H. King, Jr., has sold to Benjamin H. Irving of New York the estate bounded east on Rhode Island avenue, south on Catherine street, west on Aynault street and north on a way and on land of the Bailey and Smith estate, containing 123,839 square feet, with house and contents; also a lot bounded north, 48 feet, on a way, and west, 35 feet, on land of Pauline W. Le Roy with the stable and contents. The consideration named in the deed is \$10 and other considerations, but there are \$150 in stamps on the document, which would represent a value of \$150,000. The Catherine estate is taxed for \$50,500 and the Everett street place plot for \$2,105, or a total of \$52,615.

The Italian Brotherhood and Benefit Society held a meeting at Masonic Hall Sunday evening in honor of its retiring president, Antoine Maroldo, who starts on a visit to Italy. Refreshments and speeches made a very pleasant evening. At the business session the following officers were elected: President, Michael Pinto; vice president, Constantine Gentile; treasurer, Donato Russo.

Col. Rice of the 20th Regiment of U. S. Volunteers now in the Philippines, has been recommended for promotion to Brigadier General by General Otis. Lieutenant Colonel Dickman is also in line of promotion and will probably be made Colonel of the regiment. Capt. A. A. Barker of this city is Senior Captain and he will without doubt be made a Major if the other promotion takes place.

Second class battleship Texas, Captain Sigbee, arrived in this harbor on Saturday and later sailed for Hampton Roads. She will go to Cuba to bring back the remains of the martyrs of the Maine for interment in the National Cemetery at Arlington.

The one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of St. John's Lodge, No. 1, A. F. and A. M., occurs on December 27 next and the occasion will be commemorated by brief exercises, the real celebration having been held on September 11 last.

Hon. William J. Cronin, Mayor of Pawtucket, died at Asheville, N. C., on Thursday, of consumption. Mayor Cronin has been sick during nearly his whole term of office. He was a young man of brilliant promise.

The temporary repairs to Briggs' wharf, as authorized at a recent meeting of the city council, have been completed, so that there is no longer any danger of a cave-in where the sewer lies.

Mr. James W. Langley, who has been in the employ of Mr. J. M. K. Southwick for 18 years, will shortly start in business for himself in the store in the Fresh building.

Mr. and Mrs. Harry A. Titus and Mr. and Mrs. Alonzo F. Titus of Salem, Mass., spent Thanksgiving with their parents, Mr. and Mrs. A. C. Titus, in this city.

Mr. Andrew K. McMahon is so far recovered from his recent illness that he expects to be allowed to go out of the house this week.

Mr. George R. Fyfe, who was recently seriously injured at the Torpedo Station, is much improved and will shortly return to his home.

Thanksgiving Day.

Thanksgiving was observed as a general holiday in this city and the neighborhood towns and government stations. The places of business closed and the employees were given the day to enjoy as they saw fit. Although the weather was not nearly so pleasant as on the preceding day, it was not disagreeable, the warmth being especially pleasing to those who desired to take part in outdoor exercises.

There was no particular attraction to detain everybody in the city, so the people gathered to enjoy the holiday as best pleased them. The sound of guns was heard all day from parties in search of the elusive duck or smaller bird and some good strings were brought in during the afternoon. At the Miancluck Golf Club there was a large number of enthusiasts who founded the refractory "quitting pill" about the course, but so far as learned no records were broken. Of course the feature of the day was the "bird" and all programmes were adjusted with special reference to doing justice to the noble animal at the proper time.

Special services were held by all the churches either on Thursday or Wednesday evening and the attendance generally was as large as could be expected. A few of the churches arranged special music for the occasion. Many of the services were union meetings by the churches of the denomination. There was also the usual number of dances held on Wednesday evening by the various societies or by subscription. A most enjoyable subscription dance was given in Newton's Hall in this city, the usual Grange ball was held in Oakland Hall, South Portsmouth, the Knights of Columbus entertained at Masonic Hall, as did the Hibernians at Odd Fellows' Hall and Elizabeth Lodge, D. O. H., at Music Hall.

Mrs. Fred W. Vanderbilt gave a turkey dinner to the newboys as usual, about 400 happy boys being fed at Masonic Hall, where Hon. Robert S. Franklin, Rev. Brewer G. Boardman, and Rev. Father Meenan addressed a few words of cheer and encouragement to the lads before the onslaught was begun.

There were two games of football scheduled to take place during the day—Rogers High School vs. R. H. S. Alumni, and Swift butchers vs. Armour butchers. The latter game did not take place, however. The game between the High School and the Alumni took place on Freebody Park in the afternoon and was a close and interesting contest. The two teams were quite evenly matched, the Alumni having the advantage of weight while the School was better organized and trained. The only score of the game was a touchdown by Tins of the School team, from which Newton kicked a goal. There was no scoring in the second half and the final result was 6-0 in favor of the Rogers High School.

At the training station the day was observed by a cessation of all save necessary routine work. A bountiful turkey dinner was provided and an athletic contest for medals and other prizes was inaugurated. There was also an interesting football game between the apprentices and the "Tigers", the score being a tie at 6-6. Rear Admiral Luce (retired) and other prominent officers were present and took a lively interest in the proceedings.

A theory has been advanced recently to the effect that the number of typhoid fever cases in this city recently partook more of the nature of malarial fever than true typhoid and that it was caused by the condition of the ground rather than by water, milk or ice. At any rate experts have pronounced the water free from typhoid bacteria.

Mr. Thomas O. Richardson, Jr., who married Miss Rose Outwater, daughter of Mrs. Howard Smith of this city, was a member of one of the firms which lost heavily in the recent fire in Philadelphia.

A bad break in the water main near Henfrey Park was discovered Monday morning and the company sent two wagons to the scene to cut off the supply and repair damages.

Second Lieutenant Everett R. Wilson, 7th Artillery, was presented with a handsome sword by the members of Battery 1 at Fort Adams Saturday evening.

Mrs. Hamilton, wife of Mr. William Hamilton, street commissioner, died at her residence on Bridge street Sunday morning after a long illness.

Miss Annie T. Giffin entertained a few friends at her home on John street last Saturday evening in honor of her birthday.

Mrs. Margaret Egan, wife of Mr. James Egan, died at her home on Burdette avenue, Thursday evening after a brief illness.

Congressman Bull leaves for Washington to-day, Senator Wetmore left Sunday night.

State Shell Fisheries.

A meeting was held in the hall over Albert Hammett's store Monday evening to discuss the method of procedure to obtain better protection for the shell fisheries of the state. Mr. Brown of Warren, who is interested in the fisheries of the state in the matter, addressed the meeting stating what sort of legislation he thought was needed, and telling what had been done and what it was proposed to do. He thought the expenses connected with getting the necessary bill passed by the legislature would be about \$100. He had engaged the services of Rathbone Gardner as attorney. He had agreed to interview the fishermen and citizens interested in different parts of the state to get their cooperation in the matter. The intention of the originators of the plan was to have one law passed which shall affect the shell fish industries of all parts of the state, whether it is lobsters, scallops or oysters. There was an informal discussion of the question and the following officers were elected: President, William F. Williamson; secretary, Thomas J. Lee; treasurer, C. B. Anderson.

The Eclipse.

In the line of science there will occur on May 28 of the coming year the most important eclipse of the sun that has been observed in these latitudes for many years. It will be visible all over the United States, the path of totality running through New Orleans, Mobile, Raleigh and Norfolk. With us in this latitude the eclipse will begin at 7:58 a. m. and end at 10:32, lasting nearly three hours. The scientists and the large observatories of the country have already commenced to make their preparations for a proper observance of this occasion. Many interesting experiments and observations will be made in all parts of the country.

The city council committee on fire department opened the bids for fencing and furnishing the electric equipment for the new fire station on Coggeshall avenue, Wednesday evening. For building the fence, Friend & Maguire bid \$125, and J. F. Kane \$112, and the latter will be recommended to the council for acceptance. For the electric work Seanevin & Potter bid \$110 and Lynch & Sullivan \$120, the former bid being the successful one.

The subscription dance at Newton's Hall on Thanksgiving eve was a most enjoyable affair. The many young people present tripped the light fantastic till the wee sma' hours. Mr. Percival Patrich arranged the affair.

The Newport Artillery Company will shortly install a piano and a billiard table as social features of the organization. A special committee has been appointed to look into the matter.

Mrs. Edward J. Byrnes, formerly of this city, died in New York last Saturday, the funeral being held from St. Joseph's church in this city Tuesday morning.

Miss Wallace, daughter of Rev. Mr. Wallace, former pastor of the United Congregational church, has been the guest of Mr. and Mrs. H. F. Brown, Pawlet Avenue.

An internal revenue inspector has been in this city this week looking after the enforcement of the revenue law.

Mr. Wheeler of the Herald is enjoying a short and well earned vacation in New York.

Election of Officers.

St. Andrew's Society. At the meeting of the St. Andrew's Society held Thursday evening the following officers were elected:

President—John Mason.
Vice-President—George L. Taylor.
Clerk—Rev. George Whitefield Mead.
Secretary—George Mackie.
Treasurer—Duncan McLachlan.
Trustees—James Graham, David McIntosh, Robert M. Fenton, Alexander Orr and John Miller.
Auditors—John McKay and Adam Thompson.

Portsmouth.

A reception was given Monday evening at the home of Mrs. Lucy Plimley by the Portsmouth Women's Christian Temperance Union, to the teachers of the town and to the Middletown Union. The program consisted of singing and reading, and was followed by an address by Miss Edna Hale of Providence, the subject being "Scientific Instruction in the Public Schools." At the close of the exercises a collation was served.

Miss Anna Sherman, who has been spending some months in New York, has returned home.

Arrangements are being made for a Christmas concert at the Christian church.

Mr. Harvey Copeland and the state veterinary were in town on Saturday.

A concert is to be given in the Christian Church in December, to procure money to pay for the new wall around the parsonage grounds.

On Sunday afternoon there was a large attendance at the union temperance service at the Christian church. Rev. Henry W. McCrone and Rev. E. S. Hammond addressed the audience.

and were followed by remarks from Dr. R. A. Crittenden, Mr. Robert G. Wyatt and Mr. Lorenzo D. Tallman. A petition was signed by the greater number of those present, asking that Congress shall refuse to allow a seat in that body to polygamist Democrats of Utah.

Mr. Edward A. Coggeshall is building a shed for Mr. Benjamin Weaver, and a horse stable for Mr. William Mayer.

Mr. Henry D. Johnson, of Dinwiddie, Ill., has been guest of Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin C. Sherman.

Mr. John Powell will act as forum of the cat farm.

The latest rehearsal for the entertainment for the benefit of the Public Library, was a very successful one.

Arthur Sherman and Benjamin C. Sherman, Jr., sons of Mr. Benjamin C. Sherman, are attending Shoemaker & Clarke's Commercial College, in Fall River.

The congregations of St. Paul's Church, the Methodist Church and the Christian Church held a union service in the Methodist Church on Wednesday evening, which was well attended.

As has been the custom in former years, Portsmouth Grange held a social in Oakland Hall on Thanksgiving eve.

Middletown.

SILVER WEDDING. The twenty-fifth anniversary of the marriage of Mr. and Mrs. B. J. Grinnell of Vauchese avenue, Middletown, was most pleasantly celebrated Saturday evening, the 25th. Over a hundred invited guests assembled in their home which was illuminated not only with brilliant lights and lanterns, but with merry cheerful music. After receiving the congratulations of their friends, a song of wedded love was sung by their oldest son, Archie F. Grinnell of Providence. A very amusing and original poem carrying her childish ideas of their courtship and marriage and something of their care and training of the children in its humorous style, was recited by Mrs. Louise Perry of Bristol. A fine overture on piano and violin was rendered by Mr. George E. Perry and Miss Marston. The accompanying original song was sung by Mrs. B. J. Grinnell accompanied by Mr. Peckham and Mr. and Mrs. J. A. Tabor. A beautiful gift of six solid silver tablespoons was presented by the Women's Christian Temperance Union of which Mrs. Grinnell has for some years been president. Many other generous reminders of esteem and affection were presented, which reminders will be lovingly cherished. Most of the guests were those in bonds of church fellowship and relatives. Among the number were Mrs. Greenman and daughter from Boston, Mr. and Mrs. Gammans from Fall River, Mr. and Mrs. Mosher from Westport.

Many years have passed away, When upon Thanksgiving day, The minister pronounced you man and wife, And your path, though strewn with flow-

ers, Has been sometimes wet with showers, In your twenty-five long years of wedded life.

Cherished memories flash the way, Of your journey day by day, As you hand in hand climb up a winding hill.

Where all human feet must climb, If they view that scene sublime, Five and twenty years of love and God's good will.

CONGROSS. So we bring you royal greetings, As we gather here tonight, Your Christian life and wedding day, Fill your home with God's true light.

May your noble sons and daughters, Be your comfort and supporters, And will celebrate your Golden Wedding day.

Like a beam in the night, Cleanses your true and Christian light, Cheering all who come within its bright-ray.

Five and twenty years you share, One sweet old with golden hair, To carry on your teachings all the way, Though there's much of care and strife, Woven through each wedded life, Yet the brightness far exceeds the sunset hue.

And the fruits will show you plain, That in marriage there is gain, And mark the course the young folks should pursue.

Man should never walk alone, Mothers make the truest home, So we dedicate this silver wedding day, To the love that's true and true, For it ever abides. There is no place like home.

Tiverton.

At an early hour Tuesday morning fire was discovered in a stable owned and occupied by William N. Andrews near the railroad station, and before the flames were extinguished the stable, a grocery store owned by A. Nickerson, the sewing building of the Tiverton Net and Seine Co., and the town jail were all destroyed. The fire originated in Andrews' stable and was discovered by the watchman of the American Fisheries Company who immediately gave the alarm, but before the residents assembled to fight the fire, the stable was a mass of flames, and the fire was leaping rapidly to the other buildings in its path. There was no time to move the six horses from the stable and the townspeople devoted their energies to saving what they could of the adjoining property. The railroad depot was threatened but was saved from the flames. The work of the bucket brigade was largely lost in extinguishing the flames arising under way but by constant drenching other buildings were protected and the fire was allowed to burn itself out. The destruction of the buildings that burned was total, all being burned to the ground.

There is little doubt in the minds of the owners of the burned property but that the fire was of incendiary origin. Mr. Andrews states that there was no fire in the stove of his stable when he left there at midnight Monday. The flames spread so rapidly that the occupants of an adjoining building barely escaped with their lives. Fred Cornell, who slept in the stable, was obliged to get out of a window and was unable to save the stock.

The loss to buildings and contents was about as follows: W. N. Andrews, stable, \$2,000; Augustus Robinson, machinery, etc., in loft Andrews' stable, \$500; D. T. Church, cottage, \$500; A. T. Nickerson, building and stock in grocery store, \$1,500; Church & Brightman, sewing and the manufactory, building and stock, \$5,000. The loss was partly covered by insurance.

Selected Tale.

Society's Verdict.

Talbot came blundering into my room with the news, just as I was sitting down to dinner. The old boy was excitedly out of his mind with excitement, and wouldn't stop for a drink, or what was worse, let me have one, but dragged me down stairs and huddled me into a cab.

The rest of the night was spent in driving about London to hunt up police inspectors, station-masters, and news agencies. Finally, at 8 o'clock in the morning, we landed at his flat in Earl's Court, thoroughly dead beat.

And the papers, which I had in the sack, gave me the most of them. I gave as a couple of columns.

"Mysterious disappearance of a titled lady." Four play, "Portrait of Lady Dolly Davidson," and so on. The journalists had done it thoroughly. They gave a highly decorated account of Talbot's private career, and an analysis of his character and disposition. They did the same for his vanished wife, with a precise account of when and where she disappeared. Then they speculated as to the reason. Was it murder, robbery, suicide or an elopement?

It seems that Talbot arranged to meet his wife at Waterloo at 4 o'clock the previous afternoon, on her return from a country visit. When the train came in, the compartment in which she had travelled contained a magazine with her initials inscribed on it, a novel, "Society's Verdict," a small handbag, and an umbrella—but not Lady Dolly. Talbot had inquired of the guard. That intelligent functionary remembered the young lady quite well, but had not seen her get out. Then where the dickens is she? asked Talbot. The guard looked under the seat, and referred him to the station master.

After waiting in every direction without getting any tidings except that she had certainly entered the train, Talbot concluded that she was the victim of foul play. There was no doubt that she had travelled alone, and that she had her little jewel case with her. The jewel case was now missing, while all the articles which were practically valueless were undisturbed. The novel was lying open as if she had been reading it, and had just laid it down, and the end of a cigarette, which Talbot recognized as one of her favorite brands, lay on the floor of the carriage. There was no sign of a struggle. So Talbot drove down to my place, dragged me away from dinner, and then went to the police.

It was a delicate case, because, although simple-minded, old Talbot was quite certain it meant robbery, or perhaps something worse, and although the police supported him, it seemed quite on the cards that Lady Dolly had disappeared by her own free will. To search railway lines for a corpse is waste of time, if the supposed victim has gone yachting.

The fact is, Talbot was the last man on earth to understand Lady Dolly. He was a brainy creature, solidly and respectably ambitious, who studied law as a science, and nearly killed himself with anxiety over the few briefs he received. Lady Dolly was pretty, frivolous and feather-brained. When Talbot met her she was a penniless widow. Society was watching her closely. She was making a desperate flutter to cling to her position, and society was cynically amused. Would she make a wealthy match—which was her only chance—or would she go under?

She did neither. She married steadily-going, hard-working Talbot. It's no good to try to explain why they married. Talbot had fallen ridiculously in love, like brainy men always do, and she—well, it's my opinion that the poor little creature accepted him as a refuge against herself. Somewhere in her giddy nature there was a dash of common sense and principle, she had snatched at respectable poverty, as a safeguard against something worse. But was it possible she had fired off? Had Talbot, meaning well all the time, made life miserable for the giddy little thing? Had she found him too steady-going, too high in principle, too steady-going? It's the kind of subject you can't discuss freely with a man, even if he is your best chum. At any rate, it was just like a woman to leave everything except her trinkets, and Talbot might be making a fool of himself in drawing attention to the matter.

"I suppose there wasn't any little tiff, or misunderstanding between you?" I asked, suggestively.

"Not a bit of it," he said heartily. "We were never so thoroughly united as we were last Thursday when I saw her off. In fact, old man, I don't mind telling you it's only during the month or two that we have begun to understand one another. You haven't any idea what a good little woman Dolly is. On the surface she seems to be a little vain—and frivolous, but at heart she's as true as steel. She wasn't very fond of me when we first married—I admit it—but I'm certain it's all right now."

"I suppose there were no money troubles?" I said, carelessly.

"Nothing more than usual," he said with a faint smile. "As you know, my income is devilish small, but I won't let her drop out of the set she has been used to, because I don't think it would be wise, consequently it's a bit of a pinch to keep aloof."

"I guessed as much."

"But that hasn't anything to do with it," he said warmly. "That little woman has been deceived away and robbed. I only hope no harm has come to her. By George, Cliff, I give you my word, I'd sacrifice my life to save hers."

I knew he meant it literally, and I was rather sorry to see him so much in earnest, for I believed that within the next few days he would have a nasty shock.

"Why, man," he went on, "at the very moment it happened she was reading my own novel."

"Your novel?" I said. "What on earth do you mean? You don't mean to say that you have written a novel?"

He blushed like a schoolboy. "She made me do it," he said. "She said it was a quicker way of getting on than waiting for briefs. But don't let anybody. I have published it under an assumed name for fear it should damage me, and between ourselves, it's shocking."

A copy of "Society's Verdict" was lying on the table, and I picked it up, feeling in a vague way that it had something to do with Lady Dolly's disappearance. "What is it all about?" I asked.

"Oh, don't ask me," he said, bashfully. "It's nothing but sentimental twaddle. The usual business, you know—a woman who loves on the brink of the unspeakable."

"And what becomes of her?"

"She bolts—runs away from it all to

escape temptation and begins life again in an obscure country village."

"Of course," I asked.

"We talked it over together," said Talbot. "I told her that if I wrote a story it would be all about her, as she is the only woman I know anything about."

"And Lady Dolly is practically the heroine?" I suggested.

"The characteristics are the same, but the incidents are purely fictitious," he replied, subtly. "But why do you ask these absurd questions about a rotten novel, when I'm nearly out of my mind with anxiety?"

"Because, you silly old fellow," I said, "don't you understand that what is fiction to you is fact to Lady Dolly. She has dramatized your story in real life—and disappeared."

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